

North Carolina Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAM) Item Descriptors

The Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAM), now in its second edition, measures school-level implementation of MTSS. The purpose of administration is to help school-level and district-level personnel identify and prioritize implementation steps. The SAM contains 39 items in 6 domains (Leadership, Building Capacity/Infrastructure for Implementation, Communication and Collaboration, Data-based Problem-solving, Three-tiered Instructional/Intervention Model, and Data-Evaluation). The SAM was originally developed in Florida, and has undergone a national pilot for use in other locations.

For use in North Carolina, a standard setting project for the SAM was also conducted. A diverse group of educational professionals experienced and skilled in the implementation of multi-tiered, data-based support systems (e.g., Responsiveness to Instruction, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, MTSS) were utilized to set this criterion. In addition, this expert panel also reviewed each item on the SAM to determine its accuracy and validity for use in North Carolina. In order to add additional robustness to the assessment of MTSS implementation, the expert panel also identified existing school-level and district-level work products that would be used as evidence in the administration of the SAM.

When will it be used?

As a self-report and guide for school teams in implementation, the SAM can be used at any time. However, one time per year (April-June is the recommended time frame), the district MTSS coordinator and/or another member of the MTSS District Team would facilitate administration at the school. This facilitated administration would allow the district personnel to review evidence to support the school team's proposed score.

Directions for annual administration as a fidelity measure:

1. Each team member should review the SAM item descriptors and think how s/he, personally, would respond to each item.
2. After reviewing the SAM item descriptors independently, the team members should come together with the district MTSS coordinator and/or member of the MTSS district team to discuss their responses and reach agreement on which answer best represents the current status of implementation at their school.
3. The district personnel facilitating the administration will use the suggested evidence below each item at their discretion to verify the school team's responses on the SAM.
4. The school team, with the help of the district personnel can use the data to plan best next steps for MTSS implementation.
5. Total scores for the facilitated SAM administration will produce one of three levels of implementation within each domain: *not implementing, initially implementing, or fully implementing*.

In order to receive a score with level of implementation for each domain, the facilitator is responsible for entering score levels within the NC SAM Excel Scoring Protocol.

SAM Item and examples of supporting evidence	Not Implementing	Emerging/Developing	Operationalizing	Optimizing
Leadership				
1: The principal is actively involved in and facilitates MTSS implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Improvement Plan shows evidence of MTSS systems and practices Agendas and meeting rosters showing evidences of data-based problem-solving PD Plan(s) with MTSS systems and practices showing principal involvement Staff/student handbook with evidence of MTSS practices 	The principal does not actively support MTSS.	The principal communicates an urgent desire to implement MTSS, participates in professional development on MTSS, and is establishing an MTSS vision	AND the principal actively supports the leadership team and staff to build capacity for implementation	AND the principal actively supports data-based problem-solving use at the school
2: A leadership team is established that includes 5-7 members cross-disciplinary representation (e.g., principal, general and special education teachers, content area experts, student support personnel¹) and is responsible for facilitating MTSS implementation² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership team roster Leadership team meeting agendas/minutes 	No leadership team with explicit responsibility for leading MTSS implementation exists	A leadership team exists that includes cross-disciplinary representation,	AND the leadership team has explicit expectations for facilitating MTSS implementation,	AND the leadership team members have the beliefs, knowledge, and skills to lead implementation efforts
3: The leadership team actively engages staff in ongoing professional development and coaching³ necessary to support MTSS implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development and coaching plan Professional Development roster(s) 	The leadership team does not have a needs-based plan to provide staff with professional development or coaching to support MTSS implementation	A needs assessment is conducted to gather information on beliefs, knowledge, and skills to develop a professional development plan to support MTSS implementation	AND a professional development plan is created based on the needs assessment and used to engage staff in ongoing professional development and coaching	AND ongoing professional development activities are informed by data collected on the outcomes of professional development and coaching for continuous improvement
4: A strategic plan for MTSS implementation is developed and aligned with the school improvement plan⁴ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTSS implementation/strategic plan with alignment to or as a part of the School Improvement Plan 	No strategic plan for MTSS implementation exists	Leadership team is engaging district, family, and community partners to identify stakeholder needs, resources for and barriers to MTSS implementation	AND as part of the school improvement planning process a strategic plan is developed that specifies MTSS implementation ⁵	AND a strategic plan for MTSS implementation is updated as needed based on student outcome and implementation fidelity data as part of the school improvement planning process
5: The leadership team is actively facilitating implementation of MTSS⁶ as part of their school improvement planning process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School improvement plan with evidence (direct language or components explicitly mentioned) of MTSS 	The leadership team is not actively engaging in efforts to facilitate MTSS implementation	The leadership team engages in action planning and has created a strategic plan to facilitate implementation of the critical elements ⁷ of MTSS	AND the leadership team provides support to educators implementing the critical elements of MTSS identified in the strategic plan	AND the leadership team uses data on implementation fidelity of the critical elements of MTSS to engage in data-based problem-solving for the purpose of continuous school improvement

Adapted from *The Self-Assessment of MTSS*. (2013). Florida's MTSS, Florida Department of Education. Adapted with permission.

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Building the Capacity/Infrastructure for Implementation				
6: The critical elements of MTSS are defined and understood by school staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common instructional framework for academics and behavior At least two staff members can define critical aspect of a tier and a content area (ex, "Tell me one critical aspect of Core, Supplemental, or Intensive instruction for literacy, math or behavior at your school) 	No information on the critical elements of the school's MTSS is available	The critical elements of MTSS are in the process of being defined	AND the critical elements of MTSS are defined and communicated to school staff	AND the curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices that define the school's critical elements of MTSS can be communicated by all school staff
7: The leadership team facilitates professional development and coaching⁸ for all staff members on assessments and data sources used to inform decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development plan/calendar that includes training content on assessments and data sources PLC/Grade level/Department team agendas that include professional learning on assessments and data sources Other evidence of coaching or PD specific to job roles/responsibilities on assessments and data sources 	Initial professional development is not provided to all staff members	The staff engages in initial, job-embedded professional development focusing on: 1) purpose and administration of assessment tools, 2) role of assessment/data sources in making instructional decisions, 3) review of current assessments/data sources being utilized & those being considered, 4) analyzing and using assessment results to improve instruction, 5) using various types of data to inform instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners, 6) communicating and partnering with families about data and assessment practices	AND the staff engages in ongoing professional development and coaching related to the administration of assessments and interpretation of the data/data sources. Professional development includes: 1) changes or updates to assessments/data sources, 2) changes to data collection, tracking and analysis, 3) ongoing coaching on instructional practices and interpreting assessment results	AND the leadership team analyzes feedback from staff as well as outcomes in order to identify professional development and coaching needs in the area of assessment/ data sources in support of a continuous improvement

SAM Item and examples of supporting evidence	Not Implementing	Emerging/Developing	Operationalizing	Optimizing
<p>8: The leadership team facilitates professional development and coaching for staff members on data-based problem-solving relative to their job roles/responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development plan/calendar that includes training content on assessments and data sources PLC/Grade level/Department team agendas that include professional learning on assessments and data sources Other evidence of coaching or PD specific to job roles/responsibilities on assessments and data sources 	Professional development does not focus on data-based problem-solving	Initial professional development on data-based problem-solving is provided that includes the following elements: 1) rationale for use of data-based problem-solving, 2) problem-solving steps to address school-wide, classroom, small-group and individual student needs, 3) roles and responsibilities for team members engaging in data-based problem-solving	AND ongoing professional development and coaching on data-based problem-solving is delivered and includes the following elements: 1) differentiation of professional development based on staff roles/responsibilities, 2) coaching, 3) modeling, practice, and collaborative feedback on problem-solving steps, 4) support for collaboration and teaming skills	AND data on use of problem-solving skills and application are used to inform continuous improvement of professional development and coaching efforts
<p>9: The leadership team facilitates professional development and coaching for all staff on multi-tiered instruction and intervention relative to their job roles/responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development plan/calendar that includes training content on multi-tiered instruction and intervention content PLC/Grade level/Department team agendas that include professional learning on multi-tiered instruction and intervention Other evidence of coaching or PD specific to job roles/responsibilities on multi-tiered instruction and intervention 	No explicit connection to multi-tiered instruction and intervention is evident in professional development provided	Initial professional development on multi-tiered instruction and intervention is provided that includes the following elements: 1) rationale for and modeling of instructional and intervention design and delivery (e.g., standards, instructional routines, universal behavior supports, lesson planning for active student engagement), 2) connections are made regarding how the practices are aligned with and integrated into MTSS, 3) how data informs instruction and intervention design and delivery that reflects student diversity and results in learning opportunities for all students	AND ongoing professional development and coaching on multi-tiered instruction and intervention is provided that includes the following elements: 1) differentiation of professional development and coaching based on staff roles/responsibilities, 2) coaching, 3) modeling of, practice of, and collaborative feedback on, evidence-based practices	AND the leadership team regularly uses data on student needs and fidelity of how evidence-based practices are implemented to continuously improve professional development and coaching efforts

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10: Coaching is used to support MTSS implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching logs/documentation of coaching activities/opportunities School improvement plan includes information about coaching supports and structures around MTSS PLC/Grade Level/Department Team meetings logs evidencing coaching opportunities 	No coaching is provided to build staff capacity to implement the critical elements of MTSS	Initial coaching is occurring that is focused primarily on facilitating or modeling the components of MTSS	AND coaching activities are expanded to include: 1) opportunities to practice, 2) collaborative and performance feedback	AND data on professional development, implementation fidelity, and student outcomes are used to refine coaching activities
11: Schedules provide adequate time for trainings and coaching support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master schedule has time provided for PD and coaching PLC/Grade level/Department agendas evidence coaching support/coaching opportunities PD calendar 	Schedules do NOT include time allocated to professional development and coaching for MTSS	Schedules include time allocated for trainings	AND schedules include time for ongoing coaching support	AND schedules permit personnel to access additional training and coaching support that is differentiated based on their needs
12: Schedules provide adequate time to administer academic, behavior and social-emotional assessments⁹ needed to make data-based decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master schedule or master calendar with time for data collection included Assessment calendar 	Schedules do NOT include time allocated to administering assessments needed to make decisions across tiers	Schedules include time for academic, behavior and social-emotional assessments administered to all students (e.g., universal screening)	AND schedules include time to administer more frequent progress monitoring assessments to students receiving Tier 2 and 3 services as specified (e.g., weekly or monthly assessments)	AND schedules permit personnel to administer additional assessment (e.g., diagnostic assessments) across content areas and tiers needed to engage in data-based problem-solving
13: Schedules provide adequate time for multiple tiers of evidence-based instruction and intervention to occur <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master schedule with evidence of intervention/instruction time based on needs of school population (adequate time for Core, Supplemental and Intensive) 	The master schedule is developed without student data and does not include time for multi-tiered interventions	The master schedule is developed utilizing student data and includes time for multi-tiered interventions	AND the master schedule facilitates effective implementation of multi-tiered interventions matched to student needs by content area and intensity (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3)	AND the master schedule allows for flexible student groupings
14: Schedules provide adequate time for staff to engage in collaborative, data-based problem-solving and decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master schedule with evidence of data-based problem-solving time reserved 	The master schedule does not provide opportunities for collaborative, data-based problem-solving and decision-making to occur	The master schedule provides opportunities to engage in collaborative, data-based problem-solving and decision-making to occur	AND the master schedule provides sufficient time for the process to occur with fidelity	AND the master schedule provides opportunities for collaborative, data-based problem-solving and decision-making to occur in settings such as: leadership team meetings, grade-level meetings, cross grade-level meetings, professional learning community meetings

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15: Processes, procedures, and decision-rules¹⁰ are established for data-based problem-solving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of processes, procedures and decision-rules for tiers of instruction found in implementation plans, guidance or school improvement plans Data-decision rules outlined on some type of planning document that is evident to teams across the school building 	No systematic processes, procedures, or decision-rules are established	Processes, procedures, and decision-rules needed to engage in data-based problem-solving are developed and existing structures and resources are incorporated	AND the steps of problem-solving; procedures for accessing, submitting, and using data; and decision-rules needed to make reliable decisions are communicated to staff ¹¹	AND Data-based problem-solving processes, procedures, and decision-rules are refined based on data and feedback from staff, schedule changes, and resource availability
16: Resources¹² available to support MTSS implementation are identified and allocated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource allocation documentation (i.e., maps, inventories, etc.) MTSS implementation plan School Improvement plan 	No process exists for mapping and allocating resources available to support MTSS implementation	Leadership team members are gathering information on the personnel, funding, materials, and other resources available to support MTSS implementation	AND resource inventories are established using the gathered information on the personnel, funding, materials, and other resources available to support MTSS implementation and plans for allocating the resources are established	AND Existing resource maps and resource allocations are updated at least annually based on student need, available personnel, funding, materials, and other resources

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Communication and Collaboration				
17: Staff¹³ have consensus and engage in MTSS implementation¹⁴ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NC Beliefs Survey results indicating consensus Agenda and minutes from meetings where data is discussed that indicates good staff representation in problem-solving 	Staff are not provided opportunities to gain understanding of the need for MTSS	Staff are provided opportunities to gain understanding of the need for MTSS	AND staff has opportunities to gain understanding of its relevance to their roles and responsibilities	AND staff has opportunities to provide input on how to implement MTSS
18: Staff are provided data on MTSS implementation fidelity and student outcomes¹⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes/agendas/notes from various platforms that show presentation of both outcome and implementation data to staff- representative of the number of times per year they are reporting sharing of data 	Staff are not provided any data regarding MTSS implementation fidelity nor student outcomes	Staff are rarely (1/per year) provided data regarding MTSS implementation fidelity and student outcomes	Staff are regularly (2/per year) provided data regarding MTSS implementation fidelity and student outcomes	Staff are regularly (3+/year) provided data regarding MTSS implementation fidelity and student outcomes
19: The infrastructure exists to support the school's goals for family and community engagement¹⁶ in MTSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral and written protocols exist for communicating with families Intentional connection and involvement of families in School Improvement Planning Family engagement plan/protocol for all populations PTA documentation 	Family and community engagement is: not defined and monitored with data; not linked to school goals in SIP/MTSS plan; and procedures for facilitating 2-way communication do not exist	Family and community engagement are 1 of the following 3:	Family and community engagement are 2 of the following 3:	Family and community engagement are all of the following 3
		1) defined and monitored with data, 2) linked to school goals in SIP/MTSS plan, 3) procedures for facilitating 2-way communication exist		
20: Educators actively engage families in MTSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family attendance and active participation at problem-solving meetings evidenced through meeting minutes Family attendance and active involvement during leadership or school improvement meetings evidenced through meeting minutes Protocols for family engagement clearly communicated through handbooks, guides, expectations, etc. Evidence of outreach using a variety of venues (i.e., websites, videos, mass phone messages, emails, handouts, parent nights, etc.) Documentation of information provided to families regarding interventions, student response and progress on repeated assessments 	Staff do none of the following:	Staff do 1 of the following 4:	Staff do 2 of the following 4:	Staff do ALL of the following 4:
		1) actively engage families that represent the diverse population of the school, 2) engage families in problem solving when their children need additional supports, 3) provide intensive outreach to unresponsive families ¹⁷ , 4) increase the skills of families to support their children's educations		

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Data-Based Problem Solving				
21: Integrated data-based problem solving¹⁸ for student academic, behavior and social-emotional outcomes occurs across content areas, grade levels and tiers¹⁹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes from data-based problem-solving meetings (i.e., SIT, MTSS leadership team, PLC/Grade level/Department meetings, Individual Student Problem-Solving Team meeting, etc.) indicate problem-solving is occurring MTSS Implementation Plans document procedures aligned with model Observation of data-based problem-solving occurring with fidelity 	Data on academic, behavior and social-emotional outcomes may be collected, BUT data-based problem-solving does NOT OCCUR ACROSS: 1) academic, behavior and social-emotional areas, 2) any grade levels, 3) any tier	Data-based problem solving occurs across 1 of the following 4: 1) at least 2 content areas,(e.g., reading, behavior, social-emotional) 2) at least 50 % of grade levels, 3) a single tier 4) only academic outcomes, or only behavior and social-emotional outcomes	Data-based problem solving occurs across 2 of the following 3: 1) at least 3 content areas, 2) at least 75 % of grade levels, 3) at least two tiers	Data-based problem solving occurs across all of the following: 1) across all content areas, 2) all grade levels, 3) all tiers
22: ACROSS ALL TIERS, data are used to identify the difference or "gap" between expected and current student outcomes relative to academic, behavior and social-emotional goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes from data-based problem-solving meetings (i.e., SIT, MTSS leadership team, PLC/Grade level/Department meetings, Individual Student Problem-Solving Team meeting, etc.) indicate problem-solving is occurring MTSS Implementation Plans document procedures aligned with model Observation of data-based problem-solving occurring with fidelity 	The gap between expected and current student outcomes is NOT identified	The gap between expected and current student outcomes is identified	AND the gap between expected and current outcomes is identified, and is associated with academic, behavior and social-emotional goals	AND the gap between expected and current outcomes is identified relative to academic, behavior and social-emotional goals and is used to identify the appropriate level (tier) of instruction/intervention
23: Academic, behavior and social-emotional data are used to identify and verify reasons why²⁰ students are not meeting expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes from data-based problem-solving meetings (i.e., SIT, MTSS leadership team, PLC/Grade level/Department meetings, Individual Student Problem-Solving Team meeting, etc.) indicate problem-solving is occurring MTSS Implementation Plans document procedures aligned with model Observation of data-based problem-solving occurring with fidelity Instruction and intervention plans show use of measures that inform "root cause" or answer the reason why students are not meeting expectations (i.e., diagnostic assessments/processes) 	Reasons why students are NOT meeting expectations are NOT identified	Reasons why students are not meeting expectations are identified	AND Data are used to verify the reasons why students are not meeting expectations	AND reasons why students are not meeting expectations span multiple reasons related to instruction and the learning environment of why students struggle and are verified using a range of assessment methods

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24: Specific instructional/ intervention plans are developed and implemented based on verified reasons why students are not meeting academic, behavior and social-emotional expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes from data-based problem-solving meetings (i.e., SIT, MTSS leadership team, PLC/Grade level/Department meetings, Individual Student Problem-Solving Team meeting, etc.) indicate problem-solving is occurring MTSS Implementation Plans document procedures aligned with model Observation of data-based problem-solving occurring with fidelity 	Instructional/intervention plans are NOT developed	Instructional/Interventions plans are developed	AND instructional/ intervention plans consistently specify what will be done, by who, when it will occur, and where with enough detail to be implemented ²¹	AND instructional/intervention plans are developed based on verified reasons students are not meeting expectations
25: Student progress specific to academic, behavior and social-emotional goals specified in intervention plans are monitored <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes from data-based problem-solving meetings (i.e., SIT, MTSS leadership team, PLC/Grade level/Department meetings, Individual Student Problem-Solving Team meeting, etc.) indicate problem-solving is occurring MTSS Implementation Plans document procedures aligned with model Observation of data-based problem-solving occurring with fidelity Progress-monitoring graphs utilizing valid and reliable assessments 	Progress monitoring does NOT occur and student progress is NOT evaluated	Plans for monitoring progress toward expected student outcomes are developed	AND in most cases data collected to monitor student progress and intervention fidelity	AND Changes are made to instruction/ intervention based on student responses
26: Data-based problem-solving informs how patterns of student performance across diverse groups (e.g., racial/ethnic, cultural, social-economic, language proficiency, disability status) are addressed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes from data-based problem-solving meetings (i.e., SIT, MTSS leadership team, PLC/Grade level/Department meetings, Individual Student Problem-Solving Team meeting, etc.) indicate problem-solving is occurring MTSS Implementation Plans document procedures aligned with model Observation of data-based problem-solving occurring with fidelity 	Patterns of student performance across diverse groups are NOT identified	Data on student outcomes are collected	AND patterns of student performance across diverse groups are identified	AND Data on student outcomes informs how MTSS Implementation efforts are impacting different groups of students
27: Resources for and barriers²² to the implementation of MTSS are addressed through a data based problem solving process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource allocation maps with evidence of data-based problem-solving use School Improvement Plan with evidence of resources allocated to sustaining a MTSS MTSS implementation plan with evidence of data-based problem solving use 	Data-based problem solving of resources for and barriers to implementation of MTSS does not occur	School leadership discusses resources for and barriers to implementation of MTSS, but does not collect data to assess implementation levels or develop action plans to increase implementation	School leadership discusses resources for and barriers to implementation of MTSS and does one of the following: 1) collects data to assess implementation levels, 2) develops action plans to increase implementation	School leadership discusses resources for and barriers to implementation of MTSS and does both of the following: 1) collects data to assess implementation levels, 2) develops action plans to increase implementation

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Three Tiered Instruction/Intervention Model				
28: Tier 1 (Core) academic practices exist that clearly identify learning standards²³, school-wide expectations²⁴ for instruction that engages students, and school-wide assessments²⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional Framework Classroom walkthrough documents Instructional Plans School Improvement Plans/MTSS implementation plans 	Tier 1 elements are NOT developed and/or clearly defined	Tier 1 elements incorporate 1 of the following 4: 1) clearly defined learning standards, 2) school-wide expectations for instruction and engagement, 3) link to behavior and social-emotional content/instruction, 4) assessments/ data sources	Tier 1 elements incorporate 2 or 3 of the following 4: 1) clearly defined learning standards, 2) school-wide expectations for instruction and engagement, 3) link to behavior and social-emotional content/instruction, 4) assessments/ data sources	Tier 1 elements incorporate all of the following:
29: Tier 1 (Core) behavior practices exists that clearly identify school-wide expectations, social-emotional skills instruction, classroom management practices²⁶, and school-wide behavior data and social-emotional data²⁷ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior matrix Classroom walkthroughs School Improvement Plan School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) data Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) data Plans for classroom management Behavior lesson plans 	Tier 1 strategies are NOT developed and or clearly defined	Tier 1 strategies incorporate 1 of the following 4: 1) clearly defined school-wide expectations, 2) classroom management practices, 3) link to Tier 1 academic content/instruction, 4) school-wide behavior and social-emotional data sources	Tier 1 strategies incorporate 2 or 3 of the following 4: 1) clearly defined school-wide expectations, 2) classroom management practices, 3) link to Tier 1 academic content/instruction, 4) school-wide behavior and social-emotional data sources	Tier 1 strategies incorporate all of the following:
30: Tier 2 (Supplemental) academic practices exist that include strategies addressing integrated common student needs, are linked to Tier 1 instruction²⁸, and are monitored using assessments/data sources tied directly to the academic, behavior and social-emotional skills taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemental intervention fidelity checks Supplemental problem-solving documentation Progress-monitoring data on groups of students Tier Two Intervention matrix 	Tier 2 strategies are NOT developed and/or clearly defined	Tier 2 strategies incorporate 1 of the following 4: 1) common student needs, 2) link to Tier 1 instruction, 3) link to behavior and social emotional content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources link directly to the skills taught	Tier 2 strategies incorporate 2 or 3 of the following 4: 1) common student needs, 2) link to Tier 1 instruction, 3) link to behavior and social emotional content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources link directly to the skills taught	Tier 2 strategies incorporate all of the following:

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31: Tier 2 (Supplemental) behavior and social-emotional practices exist that include strategies addressing student needs, are linked to Tier 1 instruction²⁹, and are monitored using assessments/data sources tied directly to the skills academic, behavior and social-emotional taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemental intervention fidelity checks Supplemental problem-solving documentation Progress-monitoring data on groups of students Tier Two Intervention matrix Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) data 	Tier 2 strategies are NOT developed and/or clearly defined	Tier 2 strategies incorporate 1 of the following 4: 1) common student needs; 2) link to Tier1 instruction; 3) link to academic content; 4) assessments/ data sources link directly to the skills taught	Tier 2 strategies incorporate 2 or 3 of the following 4: 1) common student needs; 2) link to Tier1 instruction; 3) link to academic content; 4) assessments/ data sources link directly to the skills taught	Tier 2 strategies incorporate all of the following: 1) common student needs; 2) link to Tier1 instruction; 3) link to academic content; 4) assessments/ data sources link directly to the skills taught
32: Tier 3 (Intensive) academic practices³⁰ exist that include strategies that are developed based on students' needs, are aligned with Tier 1 and Tier 2 instructional goals and strategies, and are monitored using assessments/data sources that link directly to skills taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive intervention fidelity checks Intensive problem-solving documentation Progress-monitoring data on individual students 	Tier 3 strategies are NOT developed and or clearly defined	Tier 3 strategies incorporate 1 of the following 4: 1) developed based on students' needs, 2) developed to support Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, 3) link to behavior and social-emotional content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources that link directly to the skills taught	Tier 3 strategies incorporate 2 or 3 of the following 4: 1) developed based on students' needs, 2) developed to support Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, 3) link to behavior and social-emotional content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources that link directly to the skills taught	Tier 3 strategies incorporate all of the following: 1) developed based on students' needs, 2) developed to support Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, 3) link to behavior and social-emotional content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources that link directly to the skills taught
33: Tier 3 (Intensive) behavior and social-emotional practices³¹ exist that include strategies that are developed based on students' needs, are aligned with Tier 1 and Tier 2 instructional goals and strategies, and are monitored using assessments/data sources that link directly to skills taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive intervention fidelity checks Intensive problem-solving documentation Progress-monitoring data on individual students Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) data 	Tier 3 strategies are NOT developed and or clearly defined	Tier 3 strategies incorporate 1 of the following 4: 1) based on students' needs, 2) aligned with Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, 3) link to academic content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources that link directly to the skills taught	Tier 3 strategies incorporate 2 or 3 of the following 4: 1) based on students' needs, 2) aligned with Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, 3) link to academic content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources that link directly to the skills taught	Tier 3 strategies incorporate all of the following: 1) based on students' needs, 2) aligned with Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, 3) link to academic content/instruction, 4) assessments/data sources that link directly to the skills taught

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Data-Evaluation				
34: Staff understand and have access to academic, behavior and social-emotional data sources that address the following purposes of assessment: 1) identify students at-risk academically, socially, and/or emotionally, 2) determine why student is at-risk, 3) monitor student academic and social-emotional growth/progress, 4) Inform academic and social-emotional instructional planning, 5) determine student attainment of academic/behavioral outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Plan (within or separate from MTSS implementation plan) Assessment inventory School Improvement plans Screening results and use in identifying students at-risk Intervention Plans 	<p>Staff do not understand and have access to academic, behavior, and social-emotional data sources that address the purposes of assessment</p>	<p>Staff learn the purposes of assessment within MTSS and the leadership team selects measures for the purposes of assessment across academic, behavior and social-emotional areas that are reliable, valid and accessible, as well as culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate</p>	<p>AND staff engage in assessment with fidelity to: 1) answer predetermined guiding/critical questions regarding student functioning/outcomes, 2) identify students who are at-risk at least 3-4 times/year, 2) determine why a student is at risk, 3) monitor student growth/progress, 4) inform instructional/intervention planning, 5) determine student attainment of academic, behavior, and social-emotional outcomes</p>	<p>AND the leadership team and/or staff collaboratively and systematically evaluate and adjust assessment practices to ensure availability of accurate and useful data to inform instruction, and assessment tools are evaluated for continued value, usefulness, and cultural, linguistic, and developmental appropriateness</p>
35: Policies and procedures for decision-making are established for the administration of assessments, access to existing data sources, and use of data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment inventory School Improvement plan Progress-monitoring data 	<p>No policies and procedures are in place</p>	<p>The leadership team outlines policies and procedures for decision-making that include schedules for screening, use of diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring frequency, and criteria for determining tier(s) of support needed</p>	<p>AND staff consistently administer assessments, access data sources and make data-based decisions using policies and procedures for decision-making with fidelity</p>	<p>AND adherence to and effectiveness of policies and procedures for decision making are evaluated regularly for efficiency, usefulness, and relevance for students and staff, and data are used to make adjustments to the policies</p>
36: Effective data tools are used appropriately and independently by staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Plan (within or separate from implementation plan) Graphing results Professional Development/Coaching plans on data tools use 	<p>Staff do not have access to tools that efficiently provide data needed to answer problem solving questions for academic, behavior and social-emotional issues</p>	<p>The leadership team ensures availability of tools that can track and graphically display academic, behavior and social-emotional data, and staff are trained on the use of the tools and on their responsibilities for data collection, entry and management</p>	<p>AND staff use the data tools and are provided assistance as needed</p>	<p>AND data tools are periodically assessed and the necessary changes are made in order to improve functionality, efficiency, and usefulness, and staff is proficient and independent with data tools and easily support new staff members</p>

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SAM Item and examples of supporting evidence	Not Implementing	Emerging/Developing	Operationalizing	Optimizing
37: Data sources are used to evaluate the implementation and impact of MTSS implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes/agendas School improvement planning Walkthrough data 	No data sources to evaluate implementation of the critical elements of MTSS have been identified	The leadership team has identified data sources that will be used to evaluate implementation of the critical elements of MTSS	AND the leadership team uses data sources to evaluate implementation and to make systemic improvements to the critical elements of MTSS	AND the leadership team periodically conducts analyses to determine how implementation of critical elements of MTSS relate to positive student outcomes
38: Available resources are allocated effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School improvement plan or MTSS implementation plan with evidence of resources allocated to sustaining a MTSS 	Resources are NOT allocated based on student need and the availability of time, available personnel, funding, and materials	Resources are allocated based on student need	AND the relationship between the resources allocated and the outcomes of students is evaluated	AND Processes and criteria for resource allocation are refined based on strategies that result in improved student outcomes.
39: Data sources are monitored for consistency and accuracy in collection and entry procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment plan (within or separate from implementation plan) Professional development/coaching plans on data tools use Meeting minutes from leadership team discussion of fidelity with data use 	Data sources are NOT monitored for accuracy or consistency	The leadership team ensures that staff understand the importance of accurate and consistent data collection practices and have provided professional development on policies and procedures for methods, types and frequency of data collection	AND the leadership team uses a protocol (e.g., email notifications for failure to take attendance, etc.) To monitor data consistency and accuracy	AND The Leadership team periodically conducts analyses to determine consistency and accuracy of data

¹ Instructional support staff may include: interventionists, coaches, behavioral specialists, etc. Student support personnel are comprised of school psychologists, school counselors, social workers, school nurses, etc.

² Responsibilities for facilitating MTSS implementation are not limited to, but can include:
 Promoting a school-wide vision and mission for MTSS implementation, including the development and dissemination of a school-wide implementation plan
 Allocating resources (e.g., time, personnel, materials) for the planning and delivery of evidence-based assessment, instruction and intervention
 Providing ongoing professional development and coaching support to school staff
 Collecting and analyzing data on MTSS implementation efforts

³ Professional development and coaching are ongoing activities that develop the capacity of staff to implement MTSS. Efforts should be aligned with results of school needs assessments and modified based on the results of professional learning.

⁴ At the school level, a school-based leadership team should guide implementation of a MTSS. This may take place within the structure of the School Improvement Team or may be a subset of this team that is charged with implementation planning. Teams may differ based on several factors but a connection should always be made in order to facilitate

effective implementation. A long-term plan for implementation of MTSS should be developed by the school-based leadership team. This may be a part of the school improvement plan or separate from it but again should be aligned with the overall goals and actions within the school improvement plan.

⁵ A strategic plan for MTSS implementation should address the following components (at a minimum):

- a. Communication and collaboration strategies
- b. Capacity building targets and activities
- c. Data to monitor implementation fidelity of the critical elements of MTSS

⁶ Different approaches to facilitating school-wide implementation of an MTSS model can include:

The focus on a three-stage model of consensus building, infrastructure development, and implementation of practices consistent with an MTSS model

The focus on a specific sets of activities related to successful implementation of a designated model of service delivery (e.g., National Implementation Research Network framework)

The approach to facilitating school-wide implementation of an MTSS model should be connected to the School Improvement Plan (SIP), as well as other school-wide plans.

⁷ Critical elements of MTSS communicated to staff include:

Curriculum standards
Assessment data used to inform instruction
Multiple tiers of instruction and intervention
Data-based problem-solving used to make decisions

⁸ “Coaching” is defined as technical assistance and support provide to school staff to improve implementation of components of an MTSS model, including: Co-Planning, Modeling/Demonstration, Co-Facilitation, and Guided practice with high quality feedback. “Coaching does NOT necessarily have to be completed by one person. Coaching can be provided by a number of different individuals depending upon their specializations, skill sets, as well as the particulars of the context of activities. It is unreasonable to assume that just one individual, or one coach will have all the skills required to effectively provide coaching for MTSS in every given situation that may arise.” March, A.L. and Gaunt, B.T. (2013). Systems Coaching: A model for building capacity.

⁹ Behavior/Social-Emotional Assessment:

Screening: Recommended Behavior/Social-Emotional screening data include reviewing and analyzing all students’ adherence to school-wide expectations through collection of:

Minor problem behavior (classroom managed)
Major problem behavior (office discipline referral)
Attendance patterns
Other areas that some schools may choose to universally screen in the area of Behavior/Social-Emotional skills using a school-wide screening for internalizing behaviors (e.g., depressive symptoms, anxiety, etc.).

Diagnostic: Diagnostic assessments for behavior/social-emotional skills include use of functional behavior assessments in order to find the root cause for the student’s difficulties.

Progress-Monitoring: In the area of behavior/social-emotional functioning, the monitoring of student progress with the intervention should be matched with the problem of concern. Within progress-monitoring of behavior, teams will want to consider monitoring frequency, duration, intensity and latency recording.

¹⁰ Schools will need to establish and communicate the problem solving process to be used, specific steps to be followed, and criteria to use when making decisions (e.g., what is good, questionable, or poor response to instruction/intervention). Schools should consider district and state guidelines when available.

¹¹ Processes and procedures for problem solving, data collection and use, and decision-rules include:

- Specific guidelines on the steps of problem solving to be used
- Documentation requirements
- Opportunities for engaging in data-based problem solving (e.g., Professional Learning Communities, etc.)
- Roles and responsibilities of participants

¹² Resources encompass not only available monetary assets but also available personnel, instructional materials, and time that will facilitate the implementation and sustainment of an MTSS as a framework for supporting all students.

¹³ Staff refers to employees at the school that will be impacted by or will be involved in implementation of MTSS. This will always include administration, teachers, other professionals and para-professional support staff. The degree to which other employees (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria workers, administrative support staff, etc.) are included may be determined by their level of involvement with/implementation of MTSS components at the individual school level.

¹⁴ Efforts to engage staff should align with district and state guidance regarding MTSS implementation to facilitate staff understanding of connections between school, district and state initiatives.

¹⁵ Data on student outcomes, school-level implementation fidelity, the capacity of educators to implement, and commitment from staff are needed to inform implementation. Staff roles and responsibilities will drive the specific data they need to inform implementation.

¹⁶ Family and community engagement is the active and meaningful partnership that educators build and maintain with students' families and the broader community for the purpose of supporting student learning.

¹⁷ Intensive outreach to unresponsive families refers to additional activities undertaken by the school to engage families of students who need additional supports, but who are not engaging with the school's typical outreach practices (e.g., letters and phone calls home). Intensive outreach is an individualized approach requiring information gathering and problem solving to identify outreach strategies that are more likely to be successful for a family.

¹⁸ Data-based problem solving refers to a multi-step process that includes examining performance related to goals/expectations (problem identification), understanding variables causing problems (problem analysis), selecting/designing and implementing strategies to lessen barriers and achieve goals (instruction/intervention delivery), and monitoring effectiveness (monitoring/evaluation).

¹⁹ Data-based problem solving should occur (a) across content areas (reading, math, science, behavior, social-emotional and other relevant content areas for a school) (b) within and across grade levels (e.g., horizontal meetings for 6th, 7th, 8th, as well as vertical meetings), and (d) across tiers (performance data in response to instruction used to engage in problem solving for all students (Core), for some students receiving supplemental instruction (Supplemental), and for students receiving individualized support (Intensive).

²⁰ Reasons why students are not meeting expectations are sometimes referred to as hypotheses or barriers to learning. The big idea is that schools identify potential curriculum, instruction, environmental (e.g., peer distractions, classroom management issues), and learner (e.g., skill deficits) for why the student is not meeting expectations and collect data/information to determine which reasons are contributing to the problem.

²¹ Specific instruction/intervention plans include information outlining:

- a. The goal of the intervention/action plan
- b. What intervention or action steps (e.g., curriculum adjustments, instructional processes and procedures) will be put in place
- c. How often (daily/weekly/etc.) the intervention will be utilized
- d. How long each session is to be implemented
- e. Who is responsible for intervention implementation and support
- f. Where and when the intervention will happen

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- g. Plan for monitoring instruction/intervention fidelity and progress towards identified goals
- h. Timeframe (dates) for periodic review of progress monitoring data and decision points

²² Structured problem solving is utilized to identify resources that can be used to facilitate implementation and barriers that are hindering implementation for the purpose of developing specific action plans to increase implementation levels.

²³ Priority learning standards are curriculum standards that define what students should know and be able to do for a given content area and grade level (e.g., NCSCOS, Social-Emotional/Behavior Standards, etc.).

²⁴ Expectations for instruction often include elements related to the instructional routine (e.g., whole-group, small-group, and independent practice), amount of time dedicated to instruction, and which evidence-based instructional strategies are used.

²⁵ Both statewide assessments and formative assessments administered to all students are important to identify so that expectations for the data needed to inform decisions are consistent.

²⁶ Structured instruction of behavioral expectations and social and emotional skills is provided to all students. Classroom routines include social and emotional learning principles and classroom management strategies embedded into instruction. School climate and environments support student well-being. A small number of clearly defined school-wide expectations that are positively stated are a foundational element of a Tier One school-wide behavior support system.

²⁷ School-wide social-emotional behavior data may include Office Discipline Referrals, In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, and social-emotional screening data sources used to examine the effectiveness of Tier One behavior and social-emotional supports.

²⁸ Tier two interventions should be aligned with Tier One instructional goals and expectations, address high-probability barriers to achieving instructional goals and expectations, and include assessments, which measure specific skills, general outcomes, and student progress.

²⁹ Tier Two interventions should be aligned with school-wide behavior and social-emotional expectations, address high-probability barriers to meeting instructional goals and student well-being, and include assessments that monitor student discipline incidents, social-emotional skills, and well-being.

³⁰ Tier three interventions generally provide increased exposure (time in minutes) to quality instruction or intervention, more focused instruction matched to student need, and smaller groupings. Additionally, Tier Three interventions often are developed during individual student focused problem solving sessions. Importantly, Tier Three interventions focused on academic issues should be linked to Tier One and Two instructional content and processes and also should consider what behavioral and social-emotional supports are needed for success.

³¹ Tier Three interventions are matched to a student's specific behavior and social-emotional needs and ensure the student has access to Tier One and Tier Two supports. For a few students with complex needs, individualized interventions may involve wraparound supports across systems (e.g., mental health, education, medical, family, etc.). Individualized interventions include specific prevention and consequence-based strategies based on assessment information (i.e., Functional Behavior Assessment), and may include modifications to the classroom environment or instruction, teaching new skills, and reinforcement of desired behaviors as well as a range of supports such as mental health services.